

Reg Murphy

The Spy Who Talked

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Richard Helms had not made a public speech in five years. By all things right he should have been nervous, edgy, itchy. For he had to defend his organization, the Central Intelligence Agency, before one of the toughest audiences in the country, the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Helms came to the podium assured, quiet, reserved and totally competent to discuss the philosophy behind the spy system he runs.

First, he looks like a spy — spare figure, dark blue suit, quiet striped tie, white shirt, graying hair combed straight back. Second, he speaks like a spy, restrained and understated.

His agency has been under sharp attack. It has not defended itself publicly. It has felt that it must not blow either its cover or its cool. Now, however, it is clear that the CIA is beginning to feel it must defend itself in an overheated situation.

Some of the criticism has been "vicious, and some just silly," he said. One silly illustration: The charge that CIA is deeply involved in the world drug traffic. "We are not," he declared.

A more difficult question is whether the CIA is spying on its own constituency or requiring Americans to act as spies for it. "We do not target on American citizens," Helms said. Rather, he insisted that the intelligence organization is involved in the massive collection of sometimes miscellaneous information—the depth of the ocean alongside the dock in Somaliland, the sharp turns in caves in Cuba—which can be pieced together to mean something in the long run.

For example, the CIA had a report that Cuba was storing fighter planes in a large cave. Helms' agency was able to discount the report because spelunkers knew there is a very sharp turn several yards inside the cave which would make it impossible to store any vehicle there.

Basically, though, Helms came to maintain that his agency must be in an objective, credible position. It will work if he or his agency take sides in strategy decisions. "If we did," he said, "the officials involved would suspect that we stacked the evidence," bolster Helms' own position.

"We must have credibility... an intelligence organization without credibility is of no use," he added.

So in its zeal to protect its credibility with the elected officials, the CIA may have let down its defenses with the public at large. There is wide spread, and growing, public criticism of the agency.

In his understated way, Helms conceded that his agents sometimes "chafe" under this criticism. Yet he must continue to coordinate the data from the entire intelligence community — the CIA, National Security Agency, State Department, military intelligence units, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Atomic Energy Commission and others.

So now he had come to declare the agency's worth — not beg for indulgence. He had come to say that his associates are dedicated, professional — and human. He had decided to drop the cloak long enough to explain that even in England the identity of the security agency's director was a state secret.

Helms has his hands full trying to convince the public his agency is not a shadow government. But he convinced me. This is a firm resolve not to make fun of the CIA next time it tries to assemble data to save my neck.

STATINTL

FEBRUARY 10, 1971

STATINTL

JOHN
CROWN

Thank God for CIA

LAMENTABLY, it has become the accepted procedure and the "in" thing to attack the activities — real and imagined — of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Politicians who tire of that other popular sport — denigrating the Federal Bureau of Investigation — can always fall back on attributing all sorts of dark doings to the CIA.

One of our local worthies, in fact, has attributed his brilliant victory in a legal case to the fact that he implicated the CIA and, according to him, the case was dropped to avoid CIA embarrassment. That should be a landmark case for all aspiring lawyers. Get the CIA implicated and success is assured.

WITH THIS approach to the Central Intelligence Agency, the average citizen might well be forgiven if he gets the idea that the deadliest enemy facing the United States is something called the CIA. It is an organization that is often vilified and rarely praised.

Yet it we did not have it — or something identical — our security and our world position would be in a sorry state, if indeed, we existed at all.

The Central Intelligence Agency came into being in 1947 during the Democratic administration of President Harry Truman. It came into being in recognition that the United States and the Soviet Union were the dominant powers in a world that was a jungle and would become progressively more so. No longer was the United States one of an assortment of seven or more "first rate" powers. As the leader of the Western world our global

responsibilities were awesome, as they still remain.

Therefore we could no longer blithely move about in such a world with such responsibilities in the naive hope that all would turn out well. No

No longer can we go on the courtly premise that one gentleman doesn't read another gentleman's mail.

longer could we go on the courtly premise that one gentleman doesn't read another gentleman's mail.

BEING AN open and free society, our operating a covert intelligence organization is not a welcome one to many of us. But it is a choice between being dainty and being realistic. Fortunately the choice was for realism and the Central Intelligence Agency was organized as an arm of government.

As noted earlier, there are those who find great rewards in attacking the CIA. They vary. There are those dreamy-eyed idealists who believe if we were to destroy all our weapons, the magnificent gesture of such an act would lead the remainder of the world to follow suit. At the other extreme there are those who find it to the interests they serve to keep both the CIA and the FBI under constant attack.

And in between those two extremes we have different individuals and different groups who are opposed in varying measures of intensity and for varying reasons to the existence of the CIA.

RECENTLY Sen. Clifford Case of New Jersey saw fit to raise his arms in holy horror (or feignedly so) because the CIA was funding Radio Free Europe.

I fail to see the cause for alarm.

Consider the purpose of Radio Free Europe. Consider what it accomplishes. I can see a connection between it and the CIA — and justifiably so. And I can see where Radio Free Europe serves a larger purpose. Sen. Case must have been hard pushed to get a headline, and experience shows that any senator can get a headline by blasting the CIA.

Consider the plight of poor Teddy Kennedy. After exuding confidence and optimism that he would be re-elected Senate majority whip, the senior senator from Massachusetts went down in abject defeat. So how do you get a headline and divert attention from such ignominy?

You attack the CIA, that's how, and that is what Teddy did recently. With righteous anger (or feignedly so) he accused the CIA of diverting relief money for refugees in Laos to forces fighting the Communist invaders. Bravo!

BECAUSE the CIA of necessity engages in covert operations, it is relatively simple for politicians and lawyers to accuse the CIA of virtually anything they wish. For the CIA to either confirm or deny such accusations could place the organization in a dangerous position. Its operations are of such a delicate nature that it cannot afford to take public stands.

And for my part, I'm overjoyed we have the CIA. Thank God for it.